

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3051
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NY
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: CALL FOR DMC COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S RESIGNATION

REF: TEL AVIV 5999

1. SUMMARY: THE DMC SECRETARIAT YESTERDAY CALLED ON
THE PARTY'S COUNCIL CHAIRMAN TO CONSIDER RESIGNATION,
AND REBUKED THOSE MK'S AND PARTY MEMBERS WHO HAVE LATELY
ENGAGED IN DIVISIVE ACTIVITY. SECRETARIAT CHAIRMAN YADIN
REJECTED DEMANDS BY THE PARTY'S SHINUI WING THAT THE DMC
LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT COALITION. TRANSPORT MINISTER AMIT
PROPOSED A DMC DOCUMENT WHICH WOULD SET THE CONDITIONS
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FOR THE PARTY'S CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT.
WHILE THE YADIN CAMP DISMISSED DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES
AS A FORM OF ELECTIONEERING PRIOR TO NEXT MONTH'S PARTY
ELECTIONS, SHINUI ACTIVISTS INSIST THAT THEY ARE EN-
GAGED IN AN IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE WHICH WILL DETERMINE
WHETHER THE DMC WILL RETAIN ITS DISTICTIVE VOICE AND
CHARACTER. MK RUBINSTEIN'S POSITION IS UNCLEAR. IT

APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE PARTY WILL NOT SPLIT BEFORE JUNE 28 ELECTIONS IN WHICH THE YADIN FORCES ARE EXPECTED TO PREVAIL. END SUMMARY.

2. THE DMC SECRETARIAT, IN A DEMONSTRATION OF SOLIDARITY WITH CHAIRMAN YIGAEI YADIN HAS SHARPLY REPUDIATED THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTY DISSIDENTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY BEEN ORGANIZING OPPOSITION TO YADIN'S AND THE PARTY'S PASSIVE ADHERENCE TO THE BEGIN FOREIGN POLICY LINE. AT A MEETING OF THE SECRETARIAT YESTERDAY THE DIVISION BETWEEN THE YADIN "ESTABLISHMENT" AND THE MORE DOVISH SHINUI WING OF THE PARTY SHARPENED. THUS THE POSSIBILITY OF A SPLIT IN A PARTY WHICH HAS DISTINGUISHED ITSELF BY THE INTENSITY OF ITS PERIODIC INTERNECINE STRUGGLES AND THE RAPIDITY OF THE EROSION OF ITS POPULAR BASE OF SUPPORT REMAINS VERY MUCH ALIVE.

3. YESTERDAY'S MEETING FOLLOWED A GATHERING OF THE DISSIDENTS ON MONDAY WHICH CALLED FOR THE DMC'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GOVERNMENT UNLESS PRIME MINISTER BEGIN ADOPTS A MORE CONCILIATORY PEACE STAND. THE SECRETARIAT REBUKED MK'S WIRSHUBSKI AND TOLEDANO FOR THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE MEETING OF DISSIDENTS AND CALLED UPON COUNCIL CHAIRMAN DAN BIRGO TO CONSIDER RESIGNATION. WITH DMC MINISTERS YADIN, TAMIR AND KATZ, AS WELL AS THE MAJORITY OF THE PARTY'S MK'S IN ATTENDANCE, THE PARTY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LEADERSHIP SUCCEEDED TO A CERTAIN EXTENT IN DEMONSTRATING THAT THE PREPONDERANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH REMAINS WITHIN THE YADIN WING.

4. TRANSPORT MINISTER MEIR AMIT WAS NOT PRESENT DUE TO A "PRIOR COMMITMENT ELSEWHERE". HIS ABSENCE WAS SIGNIFICANT IN LIGHT OF HIS PROPOSAL WHICH SURFACED IN THE MAY 9 ISSUE OF MAARIV, THAT THE DMC PREPARE A DOCUMENT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER WHICH WOULD OUTLINE THE PRINCIPLES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FOLLOW IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THIS DOCUMENT WOULD PROVIDE CLEAR GUIDELINES FOR THE DMC REGARDING CRITERIA FOR ITS CONTINUING PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNING COALITION THROUGHOUT THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. AMIT, A FORMER CHIEF OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE, IS NOT ONLY CRITICAL OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, BUT REPORTEDLY REMAINS UNHAPPY OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE RECENT SHIPPING AND AIRLINE STRIKES, BOTH STRIKES FELL UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF HIS MINISTRY, BUT WERE SETTLED BY THE FINANCE MINISTER, WHO PRE-EMPTED CABINET AUTHORITY FOR MAKING THE FINAL CONCESSIONS WHICH ENDED THESE STRIKES AGAINST AMIT'S ADVICE. YET OF THE FOUR DMC MINISTERS, AMIT IS

THE ONLY ONE IN A POSITION TO ACT AS A POSSIBLE MEDIA-TOR BETWEEN THE TWO PARTY WINGS. HE IS MORE DOVISH THAN THE REST OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, BUT HE IS AN ACTIVIST WHO BELIEVES THAT DMC INFLUENCE FLOWS FROM ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE COALITION. HE IS THEREFORE AT PRESENT UNLIKELY TO IDENTIFY COMPLETELY WITH THE SHINUI DISSIDENTS. HIS EVOLVING ROLE AS MIDDLEMAN AND POSSIBLE FUTURE COMPROMISE LEADER WILL BE WORTH WATCHING.

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5. IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS, DMC MK'S REPRESENTING BOTH THE YADIN AND SHINUI WINGS HAVE EXPRESSED CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CURRENT DISSENSION. MK SHLOMO ELIYAHU DISMISSED THE VARIOUS ACCUSATIONS OF THE SHINUI ACTIVISTS AS MERE PREPARATORY MANEUVERS FOR THE UPCOMING PARTY ELECTIONS, AND AN ATTEMPT TO LET THEIR CONSTITUENCIES KNOW THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO RAISE THEIR CRITICAL VOICES IN BOTH THE PARTY AND THE KNESSET. MK'S SYMPATHETIC WITH SHINUI (REFTEL) MAINTAIN THAT WHILE THE JUNE 28 PARTY VOTE MAY BE ONE FACTOR WHICH HAS HEATED UP THE DMC

CAULDRON, THE RESENTMENT AGAINST THE LEADERSHIP'S IN-EFFECTIVENESS AND PERCEIVED ABANDONMENT OF PARTY PRINCIPLES IS VERY REAL. WITH THE ADDED IMPETUS PROVIDED BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPEARANCE OF THE PEACE NOW MOVEMENT AND INCREASINGLY CONTEMPTUOUS TREATMENT OF ANY CRITICISM OF BEGIN'S NEGOTIATING TACTICS, THE OLD DIVISIONS IN THE PARTY HAVE BURST INTO THE OPEN AGAIN. THUS THE SHINUI FACTION IS SEEKING TO ENGENDER PRESSURES TO MAKE THE DMC LESS SUBSERVIENT TO POLICIES DICTATED BY THE OTHER COALITION PARTNERS IN ORDER TO AFFORD IT GREATER LEVERAGE IN THE FORMULATION OF POLICY.

6. MK RUBINSTEIN, ERSTWHILE LEADER OF THE SHINUI DOVES, HAS BECOME AN INTERESTING QUESTION MARK. HE IS CURRENTLY IN THE US AND HIS VIEWS REGARDING PARTY DEVELOPMENTS ARE NOT KNOWN. IN RECENT WEEKS HE HAS SPOKEN OUT IN FAVOR OF THE BEGIN WEST BANK AUTONOMY PROPOSAL, IMPLICITLY DISMISSING SHINUI ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE UNPRINCIPLED PASSIVITY OF THE DMC LEADERSHIP. THE SHINUI REBELS THEREFORE DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF RUBINSTEIN LEADING AN OPEN SPLIT. THE YADIN WING, HOWEVER, REMAINS SUSPICIOUS OF RUBINSTEIN. ONE MK TOLD US HE IS CERTAIN THAT RUBINSTEIN HAS INSTIGATED THIS LATEST SHINUI REBELLION.

7. IN OUR VIEW THE DIVISION IN THE PARTY WILL NOT LEAD TO A SPLIT PRIOR TO THE JUNE 28 ELECTION BECUASE BOTH SIDES CAN ONLY LOSE FROM SUCH A STEP. BOTH THE DMC LEADERSHIP AND THE SHINUI GROUP SHARE THE CONVICTION THAT THE DMC'S STRENGTH DERIVES FROM ITS SIZEABLE KNESSET REPRESENTATION. A SPLIT, EVEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF IDEOLOGICAL COHERENCE, WOULD BY REDUCING ITS NUMERICAL STRENGTH DOOM ITS CHANCES OF FURTHER INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT POLICY. THE ELECTION PROSPECTS OF THE SHINUI GROUP AT THIS POINT SEEM RATHER BLEAK DESPITE THEIR RECENT ACTIVITY. MANY OF THE MORE IDEOLOGICALLY INCLINED DMC MEMBERS WHO ORIGINALLY IDENTIFIED WITH SHINUI HAVE BECOME SO DIS-

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ENCHANTED WITH THE DMC THAT THEY MAY NOT EVEN TAKE THE TROUBLE TO VOTE. IN THAT CASE YADIN WOULD PROBABLY RECEIVE A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE PERMITTING THE DMC TO CONTINUE ITS UNEASY PARTNERSHIP IN THE COALITION, WHILE LOOKING TO THE CONTINUING POWER STRUGGLES WITHIN THE LIKUD TO PROVIDE IT WITH AN EVENTUAL OPPORTUNITY TO ATTAIN NEW LEVER-

AGE IF AND WHEN THE CURRENT ALIGNMENT OF POLITICAL FORCES BEGINS
TO CHANGE.
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